



Gillian Eaglestone, an Applied Research Collaboration, Kent Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS) PhD Student studying at the University of Greenwich talks about her research journey as part of this year's National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) #YourPathInResearch campaign.



Research Project: Assessing the Cost-effectiveness of Non-Pharmacological Community Interventions for Persons Living with Dementia using a Modelling Simulation Approach.

When did you first get involved in research?

In 2006, I was working as a Community Nurse when I saw an advert for a Clinical Research Nurse based in renal medicine.

Why did you decide to get involved in research?

At the time, I had little experience of research but was excited to learn new skills and felt that I needed a new challenge. There was the added benefit that the research hours fitted around my young family. There was one other research nurse working in the department and together we shared a tiny office. I also had the opportunity to attend training courses to expand my research knowledge and recruit my first patient to a research study.

The renal research team steadily expanded over the years taking on a large portfolio of NIHR funded studies that included industry funded studies.

In 2014, I became Senior Clinical Research Nurse for the team and took on the role of Lead Research Nurse for a large multi-centre trial.

During my time there, I was supported to complete a BSc and MSc in Health and Social Care and, with the encouragement of my tutors, was able to undertake and publish my own research.

What has been the highlight of your research career so far?

The highlight of my research career, so far, is being accepted to undertake further research as a PhD student.

When I left my clinical research nursing role in 2017, I began working in academia and was involved in a large variety of interesting research projects in areas including sport and exercise, education and learning disabilities. Alongside this, I began volunteering on a sports reminiscence project and an art project to help people

living with dementia. It was these volunteering experiences that led me to start a PhD researching non-pharmacological interventions for dementia, supported by the Institute for Lifecourse Development, and a Vice Chancellor's Scholarship from the University of Greenwich, in partnership with the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey & Sussex (ARC KSS).

Why do you believe research is important?

High quality research in healthcare is important to enable the development of new treatments and best practice guidelines that will benefit patients and ensure high-quality care. Research can be hard work but, at the same time, so important as without it, new treatments and advances won't be made. Since I started working in research I have noticed that people are becoming more aware of the benefits of taking part in research and are keen to be involved.

What do you love about your job?

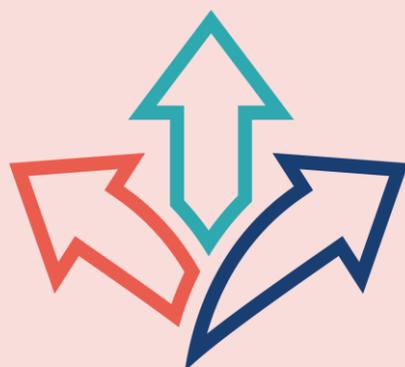
I love the variety of activities involved in a researcher role. My day can be very varied, whether that's talking to members of a Public and Community Involvement and Engagement group, attending a dementia conference, writing a paper, designing a survey or analysing data. I also enjoy designing and leading my own research project and being involved in new and exciting research. It's very rewarding to see that you are contributing to new knowledge, technologies and improvements.

Would you recommend research as a career to others?

Absolutely! I would encourage others to get involved in research as it is very varied and rewarding. There are opportunities to study, travel and progress your career within research. Research is taking place all the time and affects everything we do. Things are changing so fast, given issues including the pressures of an increasingly ageing population and the demands on public finances.

What are your plans and ambitions for the future?

My main aim is to produce a high-quality piece of research to inform decision makers about the cost-effectiveness of dementia interventions; and finish my PhD. After that, I want to continue my career working in research, wherever that takes me.



**YOUR PATH
IN RESEARCH**